

The Agentic NetOps Spectrum

Four vendors, four different bets on who actually controls the network

70%

of enterprises are expected to be running agentic AI as part of their IT infrastructure operations by 2029, up from under 5% in 2025.

Gartner, Predicts 2026: AI Agents Will Reshape Infrastructure & Operations.

That number is why agentic AI is suddenly on every network automation vendor's homepage, and why the word is doing very different work depending on which page you're reading. I spent real time this month looking past the marketing pages at what four vendors have actually shipped, not what they're promising, to see where each one actually drew the line on how much control an AI agent gets. **The real question underneath all four isn't whether the agent is smart. It's who, or what, actually gets to touch the network, and under what governance.** Laid out side by side, these aren't four vendors racing to the same finish line. They're four genuinely different answers to that one question.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 Itential	One platform, policy governed, nothing moves without a rule checking it first.
02 Gluware	The real risk isn't its own agent. It's the growing pile of other vendors' agents nobody is governing.
03 Selector	Don't ship one agent. Ship a team of them, including one that builds more.
04 Kentik / Infoblox	Better data wins. Let a human, or another system, decide what to do with it.



Itential

GA JULY 2026

One platform, policy governed. Nothing moves without a rule checking it first.

FlowAI pairs agentic reasoning, the part that decides what should happen, with deterministic, policy governed execution, the part that actually touches the network, inside a single platform rather than handing execution off to a separate tool. That's the real design choice underneath the product: keep the thinking and the acting in one governed system instead of letting an agent reason in one place and act in another.

Gartner named Itential a Representative Vendor across five separate 2026 Market Guides this year: infrastructure automation and orchestration, AI assistants for infrastructure as code, agentic NetOps software, network automation platforms, and campus networking software. Itential's own materials describe this as the only platform recognized across all five. That's their claim about their own position, not an independent ranking Gartner issued, worth keeping that distinction clear whenever it comes up in a sales conversation.

The practical read: Itential is betting that the safest place for an agent to operate is fully inside a system that already knows the rules, rather than bolted onto one after the fact.

WHAT THEY'RE BETTING ON

A single governed platform beats a best-of-breed stack, because the policy check and the execution step can never drift apart if they live in the same system.

HOW IT'S DIFFERENT

Every other vendor on this list is either governing agents it doesn't own (Gluware), shipping a team of separate agents (Selector), or staying out of execution entirely (Kentik/Infoblox). Itential is the only one keeping reasoning and action under one roof.



Gluware

GA JUNE 2026

The real risk isn't its own agent. It's the growing pile of other vendors' agents nobody is governing.

Titan reached general availability June 10, 2026. Where Itential governs its own execution, Titan positions itself as a layer sitting between a growing ecosystem of third party AI agents, including ones a customer didn't build and doesn't fully control, and the actual multi-vendor network those agents are trying to touch.

Titan Exposure Management, a vulnerability detection and remediation module, shipped a month earlier, in May 2026, ahead of the broader Titan platform itself. That sequencing is worth noting: the vulnerability-facing piece came first, the governance layer came second, suggesting Gluware is building toward the control-plane story deliberately rather than backing into it.

The bet here is structural, not just technical: governance becomes the product once every vendor ships its own agent and nobody is watching the seams between them. Gluware isn't trying to out-build the agents themselves, it's trying to own the space between them.

WHAT THEY'RE BETTING ON

As more vendors ship their own agents, no single agent vendor will be trusted to govern all the others. The referee role becomes its own category, separate from any one agent.

HOW IT'S DIFFERENT

Itential's bet only works if a customer is willing to put everything inside one platform. Gluware's bet assumes the opposite, a messy multi-vendor reality that already exists and needs a referee, not a replacement.



Selector

ROSETTA OCT 9, 2026

Don't ship one agent. Ship a team of them, including one that builds more.

Selector Foundry is built on Selector's existing AIOps and observability base, and ships six agents at general availability rather than one. Rosetta, the conversational orchestrator sitting in front of the other five, launched October 9, 2026, just days before this piece went to print.

The rest of the lineup: Loom handles correlation and root cause analysis, Ticketmaster handles ITSM, Herald handles reporting and notifications, Artist builds dashboards. The sixth, Sculptor, is the one worth watching closely, its entire job is to build new agents. That's a meaningfully different kind of bet than the other three vendors on this list are making.

Instead of drawing a tight boundary around what one agent can touch, the way Itential does, or inserting a governance layer between agents, the way Gluware does, Selector is betting on scale itself, more agents, more specialized, with a mechanism built in to keep producing more of them.

WHAT THEY'RE BETTING ON

Network operations problems are too varied for one general-purpose agent to handle well. The right answer is a growing roster of specialized agents, with a factory that keeps adding to it.

HOW IT'S DIFFERENT

A self-replicating agent factory is a genuinely different risk profile than a single governed platform or a governance layer, worth a direct question in any real evaluation: who approves what Sculptor builds before it ships?



Kentik / Infoblox

ACQUISITION CLOSED AUG 2026

Better data wins. Let a human, or another system, decide what to do with it.

Infoblox completed its acquisition of Kentik in August 2026, its second acquisition of the year after Axur in May. The combined AI Advisor pairs Infoblox's own identity and DNS data with Kentik's flow data analytics to feed what the two companies call an AI ready operational data fabric.

Nothing in the current positioning claims autonomous action. The language throughout is advisory: better data, surfaced more clearly, for whoever or whatever makes the actual call. That's a deliberate choice, not an omission, Infoblox is not racing the other three vendors on this list toward an execution layer.

This is the most conservative bet of the four. The agent's job, as positioned today, is to make the data trustworthy and legible, not to touch anything itself. In a category where every competitor is racing toward more autonomy, staying advisory-only is itself a real strategic position, not a sign of being behind.

WHAT THEY'RE BETTING ON

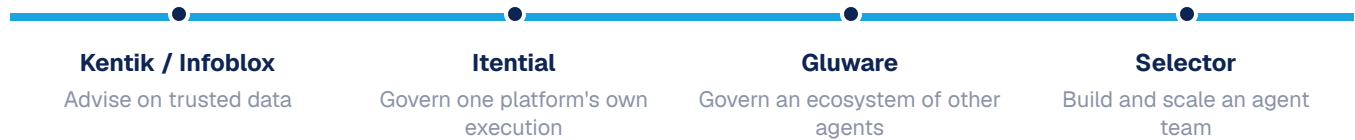
The bottleneck in network operations today is trustworthy data, not a shortage of agents willing to act on bad data. Fix the data layer first.

HOW IT'S DIFFERENT

The other three vendors here all draw their line somewhere inside execution. Infoblox draws it before execution starts, the only one of the four not yet claiming the agent acts on anything.



WHERE EACH ONE ACTUALLY SITS



FOUR QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING BEFORE THE DEMO

- 1 Is this agent informing a decision, or is it executing one?
- 2 Does it govern only its own platform, or does it have to referee somebody else's agents too?
- 3 Is what's in front of you actually generally available right now, or is it a roadmap slide wearing a GA press release?
- 4 If the vendor cites an analyst stat, can they show you the actual report it came from?

I built this by doing the same kind of structured competitive reading I used to do full time. If running this kind of read on your own category would help, I'm at nigelhickey.com/consulting.

SOURCES

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